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ABSTRACT

Part memoir, part courtroom drama, part primer for fighting assaults on free speech, this book narrates a 5-year-long federal battle which began in 1986 to reinstate several literary classics to the reading list of a public high school in Lake City, Florida. The book recounts how the superintendent, the local school board, and several religious fundamentalist preachers agreed to ban Aristophanes' "Lysistrata" and Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale" from the high school's classrooms, despite the objections of English teachers and other citizens--the volume in question was part of a Heath humanities series, had passed the state evaluation procedure, and had been used since 1980. Relating how the issue was taken to several courts, from the United States District Court, to the Court of Appeals, the book quotes dialogue from school board meetings and courtroom testimony to show how several citizens, supported by the ACLU, refused to give in to the more repressive elements in their community. The book takes the position that what American children read at school remains a controversial issue and that free speech remains a precarious right. (NKA)

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